

#159 “Where To Find Wise Counsel”

by Brent Barnett

www.relevantbibleteaching.com

There is only one place to find wisdom, namely, in God’s Word. And there is only one way to find wisdom, that is, through Jesus Christ. Colossians 2:3 says, speaking of Christ, “In whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.” As we look for wise counsel in life, we need to look no further than Christ and the Scripture. Everything we need to know is contained in His Word. As Romans 15:4 says, “For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.” What “wise” men of this world relegate to myth and fables, God says is instructive unto wisdom for today. Only those who are humble enough to receive it will be blessed by it.

1 Corinthians 3:18-20 says,

“Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you thinks that he is wise in this age, he must become foolish, so that he may become wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness before God. For it is written, ‘He is THE ONE WHO CATCHES THE WISE IN THEIR CRAFTINESS’; and again, ‘THE LORD KNOWS THE REASONINGS of the wise, THAT THEY ARE USELESS.’”

There are many self-proclaimed or media-anointed gurus out there teaching various forms of wisdom, but what is sure is that all of their “wisdom” is foolishness before God because it is not based in Christ or His Word. It is all a waste. Rather than leading to success and prosperity, it leads to eternal loss and destruction. Even in Christian circles, worldly wisdom can sneak in. Just because someone has a lot of people that listen to him or her does not mean that such a person ought to be listened to. Clever words and persuasive speaking do not necessarily mean wisdom is contained therein (1 Corinthians 1:17, 19; 2 Peter 1:16). Too often, the words are mere forms of godliness that are devoid of the power of Christ (2 Timothy 3:5). In life, people will give us all kinds of advice, some of it solicited and some not. Our only hope in identifying true wisdom from worldly wisdom is to be like the Berean Christians who searched out the Scripture on their own to see if what they were being told was indeed true (Acts 17:11). We can trust Christ in us to give us wisdom as we open up His Word and prayerfully seek the truth (Jeremiah 29:13).

The world looks to the strong, the intelligent, the successful, the popular, the famous, and the powerful for wisdom. But according to the Scripture, these folks are the least likely to be true sources of wisdom. 1 Corinthians 1:26-27 says,

“For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are

strong.” Paul was not saying that it is impossible for rich or powerful people to have wisdom, just that it is difficult. Christ also alluded to this truth when He spoke of how difficult it is for those with many riches to find and submit to the truth in Christ (Matthew 19:23). Paul was reminding the believers at Corinth that many of them were weak and insignificant in the world’s eyes and by the world’s criteria, but they were those who had responded to the gospel. God used them to bring shame upon the “wise.” Jesus said in Luke 10:21, “At that very time He rejoiced greatly in the Holy Spirit, and said, ‘I praise You, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent and have revealed them to infants. Yes, Father, for this way was well-pleasing in Your sight.’” Men cannot get to heaven or find wisdom by their own intellect, strength, power, or influence. Wisdom cannot be bought, discovered, or won in battle. Age and experience of themselves alone do not bring wisdom. Wisdom comes by faith in Christ, something the “wise” of this world tend to miss. As we seek wise counsel, we must look beyond the externals to Christ and His Word. The devil’s advice can sound good, and the people giving it can mean well. Yet without Christ, wisdom cannot be present. Helpful hints and wise tidbits are not spiritual wisdom. There is a way that seems right to a man, yet its end is death (Proverbs 14:12). We must always measure everything against the Bible lest we get way off course without even knowing what is happening to us.

David said in Psalm 119:24, “Your testimonies also are my delight; they are my counselors.” There is nothing wrong with having wise people as counselors (Proverbs 15:22), but the emphasis ought to be on “wise” as opposed to “counselors.” This is because a counselor is only as good as the wisdom he or she possesses. Even in the absence of other human opinions, it is possible to find true wisdom as David did simply by knowing and studying God’s Word. In fact, David became convinced that his own study of Scripture gave him more wisdom than those who were supposed to be advising and teaching him. Psalm 119:99 says, “I have more insight than all my teachers, for Your testimonies are my meditation.” If we want to find wise counsel, it is not that complicated. We need to be in Christ, and we need to study His Word. The more we study His Word, the better we will be at identifying true wisdom from worldly wisdom. The better we will become at finding people who teach what is right and good.

Godly counsel can be a great blessing, but we must never underestimate the treasure trove of wisdom that we as priests of the kingdom have access to on our own by the Spirit of God opening up God’s Word to our hearts and minds. It is in Christ and His Word where true wisdom is found, and counsel is only valuable inasmuch as it aligns with God’s Word. It is great when others help us grow in learning to follow the Spirit, but ultimately we are responsible for following hard after Him ourselves (Psalm 63:8 KJV).